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Children's Literature— Between World and Global Literature*

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Studies on children's literature has a well-established position in contemporary literature studies. The effects of successive "turns" in the humanities reach such research without much delay, but at the same time it retains its specificity related to its unique audience¹. For the same reasons for which children's literature was not the most grateful subject of research on the past history of literature, which was derived from the positivist tradition, it is now a field of diverse observations, especially in cultural studies, childhood studies and translation studies. It has turned out to be a special place where, with great clarity but without simplifications, one can see processes which are reflected in "adult" literature in a much more complicated way. Or, to put it differently, maybe despite its (apparent) simplicity, the social and cultural phenomena that affect it are extremely complicated?

It is worth dwelling on what is currently happening in literature intended for children and to reflect on it in a scholarly manner. In particular, a look at the past century of transformations of children's books compared with the last

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¹ In view of the unquestionable uniqueness of the child reader and the specificity of their intellectual and perceptual capabilities, I am talking here consistently, albeit aware of simplification, about children's literature, and not "children's and youth literature". Young adult literature is one of many possible types of reading matter for young people.

dozen or so years makes it possible to notice clear tendencies: from the idea of a “children’s republic” of books dating back to the 1930s, through questions about the world canon, characteristic of the second half of the 20th century, to the latest processes taking place in the world of children’s books confronted with the phenomena of globalisation.

A children’s republic of literature

From today’s perspective, it is clear that one of the most important “turns” in the approach itself to children’s literature took place when Paul Hazard published his small work entitled *Les livres, les enfants et les hommes* in 1932 [O’Sullivan 2005, p. 6; 2011, pp. 189–190]. In Poland this book, translated by Irena Słońska, appeared with a significant delay [Hazard 1963]². But its international reception and significance were considerably affected by Marguerite Mitchell’s English translation [Hazard 1944]. The precise moment of publication can be considered no coincidence. The dream expressed here of a “world commonwealth of nations” and “brotherhood of men” [Mahony 1944, p. vii] seemed to be almost impossible to realise and at the same time the most desirable. In his essayistic approach, Hazard adopted the widest possible perspective, which can still inspire and encourage people to look at phenomena characteristic of children’s books from a long distance. A comparatist originally from French Flanders, this outstanding expert on the European Enlightenment was a child of his time and shared with it some ideas about childhood, which did not come from cold findings concerning the history of civilisation, but rather belonged to the sphere of idealising dreams. However, if the author of *The Crisis of the European Mind* did not share these beautiful utopias, he would probably not have written that important book, which did not seem necessary to his output. A return to Hazard’s book after more than eighty years can therefore only have the character of an expedition into the world of a certain sensitivity, which is nowadays impossible to recover. There is a thoroughly modernist, although derived from romanticism, vision of childhood and the image of a child who wants “wings”, dreams and, of course, books.

Adults are rarely free; they are prisoners of themselves. Even when they play it is self-consciously for that reason. [...] They seldom play for the sheer joy of playing. How far removed is the world of childhood! [...] Children are rich with all they do not own, rich with the potential wonders of their universe. Making believe is not only one of their earliest pleasures, it is their vital spark, the token of their liberty [Hazard 1944, pp. 1–2].

² The remarks added in the footnotes and the introduction about the incompleteness of this approach, especially the footnote, which is full of reservations, to the praise of American children’s libraries as an area of freedom, were also of significance.

It was Hazard who looked at children's literature as a certain supranational whole and saw it simultaneously in its European specificity determined by the great opposition between the culture of the North and the South. This part of his discovery still seems to be the most inspiring to this day, although not literally anymore. Hazard drew a kind of map of European culture and its approach to books for children in the 18th and 19th centuries and of world culture in the 20th century. It is not only interesting to see how a researcher of Romance literature transgresses his French-centric attitude, but also where the limits of the possibility of this breakthrough are.

Hazard thought simultaneously in national and supranational categories. Assuming that children's literature displays "the way in which a national soul is formed and sustained" [Hazard 1944, p. 111], he is not afraid to formulate statements about the characteristics of the French and English, although they smack of stereotype. He translated the typical qualities of French culture into the features of French works for children: "Who has not spoken of our passion for logic?" "They say that, next to logic, what characterises us most is our wit" [Hazard 1944, pp. 121, 123]. However, of greater importance is his conviction that it is possible to extract from texts addressed to children things that are important for a given culture: "England could be reconstructed entirely from its children's books" [Hazard 1944, p. 128].

The "Republique universelle des enfants" ("The Word Republic of Childhood") by Paul Hazard, a beautiful utopia of the 1930s, was after several years considered to be the "first republic of children" proclaimed on the eve of World War II [Elefante, Pederzoli 2010, p. 25]. The sound of this phrase and its connection with the thought tradition of French cultural researchers suggests that it may be reasonably compared with the much later concept of Pascale Casanova and her "La Republique mondiale des Lettres" ("The World Republic of Letters") [Casanova 2004, p. 82].

This dream of a children's republic that derived from a humanist fairy tale from before the Second World War and that was, as I believe, most fully expressed by Janusz Korczak, ended with the outbreak of the war. Nevertheless, it was during the Second World War and after it that this idea was used—on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

It is worth trying to juxtapose Hazard's book with a literary work that stems from similar ideas about the child and the literature intended for him/her. In 1943, *The Little Prince*, one of the few great works that France has enriched children's world literature with, was published in New York simultaneously in French and English. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, its author, died in 1944. In the same year, Paul Hazard, 22 years older than Exupéry, died in Paris. This poetic and philosophical parable was the best literary equivalent of Hazard's theses and its final fulfilment. The concurrence of the ways of thinking represented by both authors was no coincidence. As Pierre Bourdieu might put it, Hazard, who was a son and grandson of teachers from northern France (near Dunkirk),

and one generation younger Exupéry, a descendant of an aristocratic family, had different habituses and were active in different fields—namely research and literature—but shared similar ideals. They both attended classes of the Catholic religion, and both learnt during their early school years that “the heart has its reasons, which reason does not know” [Pascal 1910, p. 98], and they both strived for mastery in their vocation. A more pedantic and meticulous researcher, gifted with flair so much appreciated among the French representatives of the *homo academicus* type, and a prose writer overtly disdainful of excessive minuteness meet with each other at a point marked by such concepts as life, dreams, wings, freedom, imagination and friendship.

Not young but still at an ideal age to be a scholar, Hazard ends his lectures at Columbia University to return to occupied Paris, although there are some worries awaiting him that will shorten his life. Much younger, but a bit too old to be a pilot, Exupéry insists on flying aeroplanes himself, up to and including his last flight. They both feel responsible for what they were tamed by in their childhood. Hazard, recalling illustrations remembered from his childhood, wrote: “What Frenchman, seeking the sources of his love for his country, does not include the memory of those books and pictures in which he saw France for the first time? It is like that in every country” [Hazard 1944, pp. 143-144]. This childhood vision of “sweet France” as a “beautiful little girl with long braids and bright eyes”³ did not obscure the “sense of humanity” [Hazard 1944, p. 144] neither to the scholar, nor to Exupéry. It is clear that, despite their differences, they belonged to the same spiritual formation that lasted more than one generation. Neither artists nor researchers belonging to the next generations inherited the childhood idealism of both writers.

Various embodiments of *Weltliteratur*

When Goethe used the word “Weltliteratur”, children’s books did not have the honour of being included in its scope, and they did not deserve it, to tell the truth. He himself recalled what he had read as a child in *Poetry and Truth* in the following way: “No libraries for children had at that time been established. The old [...] had still childish notions, and found it convenient to impart their own education to their successors. Except the *Orbis Pictus* of Amos Comoenius, no book of the sort fell into our hands [...]” [Goethe 2008, p. 97].

As we continue to read about the illustrated Bible, *Gottfried’s Chronicle*, the *Acerra philologica* collection, fairy tales, myths and Ovid’s *Metamorpho-*

³ Émile Henriot’s words, quoted by Irena Słońska, Hazard’s translator into Polish, in one of her footnotes [Hazard 1963, p. 128].

ses, it is no surprise that the same child reader coined the term *Weltliteratur* when he grew up⁴.

[...] my young brain was rapidly furnished with a mass of images and events, of significant and wonderful shapes and occurrences; and I never felt time hang upon my hands, as I always occupied myself in *working over, repeating, and reproducing* [my emphasis—A.C.] these acquisitions [Goethe 2008, p. 98].

Goethe also talks about Fénelon's *The Adventures of Telemachus*, *Robinson Crusoe* and, finally, about "precious remnants of the Middle Ages" [Goethe 2008, p. 99] such as *Till Eulenspiegel* or *The Beautiful Maguelone* found by children in notebooks lined up on a table in front of an antique shop.

Not much time had passed since Goethe's childhood when works appeared in German literature whose literary value, ambiguity and status in the entire cultural system entitled them to be classified within the incontrovertible canon. E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Nutcracker* is ultraromantic and the most expressive example due to rich reception, also in its musical version.

When in the second half of the 20th century the canon of children's books is gradually (and of course not finally) codified, the model of the mutual exchange of thoughts and works proposed by Hazard turns out to be only a dream. He wrote: "Every country gives and every country receives—innumerable are the exchanges—and so it comes about that in our first impressionable years the universal republic of childhood is born" [Hazard 1944, p. 146].

Hazard's idealism is not confirmed by the examples in his book. Not all countries have contributed something to the world's resources. The "strong" literatures were stubbornly indifferent to what the "weaker" ones said about themselves. In 1986, the Israeli researcher Zohar Shavit published a monograph entitled *Poetics of Children's Literature*. The concept of Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem, to which Shavit owes much, is here illustrated with examples of English and her native Hebrew. Inspiration in this case is unidirectional. The great 19th-century tradition of English children's books inspired others, including children's literature created in post-war conditions in Israel. Even-Zohar's semiotic model was needed when Shavit presented the "ambivalent status of a text", as says the title of one of the chapters of her book [Shavit 1986, p. 63], and its dual place in the literary system (*Alice in Wonderland* is an example analysed in great depth here). Among the texts considered by Zohar Shavit there are also Lotman, Tynyanov and Jakobson, which makes these contexts familiar to Jerzy Cieřlikowski's readers [Cieřlikowski 1985]. The reflections on the double recipient and chapters on adaptations and translations, as well as canon issues also have their counterparts in Polish research.

⁴ On the subject of the different shades of meaning of the term *Weltliteratur*, first in Goethe himself and then in the reception of the term, see: Bilczewski 2010, pp. 45–57.

Shavit's book ends at the moment when in children's literature and literary systems there are more and more rapid transformations taking place. Therefore, we can add a "continuation", drawing on a slightly later comparative monograph that occupies a high place among articles on children's literature. In 2000, the Irish comparatist Emer O'Sullivan published a German treatise *Kinderliterarische Komparatistik*, which, translated into English by Anthea Bell and in a slightly modified version, was published as *Comparative Children's Literature* in 2005. The situation of the Irish scholar who carried out her comparative research at German universities, makes it necessary to ponder for a moment on the paradoxes of the relationship between the province and the centre, as well as the perspective that recognises the importance of London on the map of children's literature but also takes other points of view into account.

The world canon and the "small literatures"

The "reactivation" of *Weltliteratur* and the "process of homogenising individual literatures into world literature" is mentioned by Andrzej Hejmej, who refers to Jonathan Culler, Pascale Casanova and David Damrosch [Hejmej 2013, p. 279; 2015, pp. 83–104]. Adam Kola, in turn, points to the differences between contemporary ways of understanding world literature [Kola 2012, pp. 111–127; 2014, pp. 41–63]. All its concepts certainly deserve consideration in relation to literature for children⁵. However, despite the fear of oversimplification, I will omit the nuances that are important for theorists and the significant differences between the various models of world literature if they have not been strongly reflected in research into children's literature [Hejmej 2013, pp. 270–271].

The world "children's" canon consists of undisputed, well-known masterpieces and outstanding, or even merely successful, but also widely known books translated into many languages. With significant local differences, it is much easier for researchers in different countries to seek agreement in this area than in the case of disputes over the canon of adult literature. And it is not a question of the less "political" nature of this issue or of the lower temperature of disputes, but the fact that this canon, never written down once and for all, is in fact easily recognisable and repeats itself in our cultural circle. The examples that Shavit analyses in her monograph, apart from texts belonging to Hebrew children's literature, are well known in Poland. I remember all of the works that she discusses in detail in her analytical chapters from my childhood, with the exception of English books from the 1930s by Enid Blyton, individual translations of which appeared in Poland in the 1990s. The

⁵ I attempt to deal elsewhere with David Damrosch's concept of world literature in the context discussed here.

animated adaptation of *Noddy* is known in Poland today (although its author is not necessarily recognisable). The feature film in which the writer herself is a character—a moving and reflective biography entitled *Enid* with an excellent performance by Helena Bonham-Carter—deserves attention among other examples of “canonisation” of this kind⁶.

The worlds of “small literatures”, whose interactions are certainly noteworthy, are also extremely interesting. The 20th-century Swedish children's literature seems to be a phenomenon that is difficult to compare with any other example of “small literature”, and when it comes to the promotion of what is signed as Swedish, children's books are themselves a brand.

Separate treatises, such as the book entitled *Przekłady w systemie małych literatur* (*Translations in the System of Small Literatures*), which deals with Polish-Italian and Italian-Polish relations, discusses how “small literatures” relate to one another. The asymmetry, which is obvious here, comes down to the fact that the most important works of Italian children's literature have been published and well known in Poland. In Italy, on the other hand, knowledge of works translated from Polish is poor. Additionally, it is also distorted by simplified images of Polish culture (which is best represented by one of the illustrations in the Italian version of Konopnicka's book *O krasnoludkach i sierotce Marysi*—Queen Tatra appears here wearing a kokoshnik on her head, which is a traditional Russian folk female headdress). At the same time, all the works of Italian literature that have found their way into the world canon are known in Poland, and this includes more than just *Pinocchio* [Woźniak, Biernacka-Licznar, Staniów 2014].

From the international to the global

This was certainly known to Paul Hazard: even in its most splendid era Paris was not the world capital of the children's republic of literature, and when the works that found a place in the canon, like Perrault's famous work, were written, there was no children's literature, let alone canon of it. The specific “adulthood” or even “senectitude” of French culture acted against it in this case. Throughout the 20th century, the “prime meridian” of children's literature was, like the real one, located in a district of London. The small shifts of the prime meridian proposed by American cartographers in the year (attention!) 1984 should give literary scholars reason for thought and encourage them to

⁶ Biographical films about the creators of children's literature are, above all, *Finding Neverland*, whose protagonist is J.M. Barrie, and earlier *Shadowlands* (C.S. Lewis). Separate feature films have recently been devoted to the fate of Beatrix Potter and Pamela Travers.

ask many questions about the wider situation in which children's literature operates.

What is the criterion that determines the prestige and consecration of the canon of children's books throughout the world? Is it the "invisible hand of the market" or institutional authorities who decide? What are the mechanisms of international transfer? Is intercultural dialogue really taking place or is it just a pretence? Regardless of the answers we give, it must be recognised that in the world of "small" books there is no question of applying solely artistic criteria. Many people on award committees represent the field of education, not art, as Shavit [1986, p. 36] has pointed out. Even in the conclusions of the committee awarding the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Award, the prevailing justification was not artistic but educational [Shavit 1986, pp. 37–38]. This important difference makes it necessary to ask a question about the field as understood by Bourdieu. "If literature is defined, then, as a unified international field (or a field in the process of being unified) [...]" Casanova [2004, p. 103] begins her thought. A scholar of children's literature should finish her sentence differently, changing the singular to plural. This is not a field, but fields. Much less complicated (artistically and intellectually) creation for children is a game in several fields at the same time.

What is the stake in the game? What is the *illusio* of the authors of this domain of literature? What kind of prizes are created by its variable hierarchies, if not the Nobel Prize (in the 20th century there were claims, especially in Sweden, that Astrid Lindgren should be awarded the Nobel Prize).

Let me just remind the reader that Hazard, whose character is still present here, from 1934 was on the jury of *Le Prix de Jeunesse* literary award, the main aim of which was to discover and publish new works addressed to audiences aged 7–14. The jury also included the poet Paul Fort and prose writer George Duhamel. *Le Prix de Jeunesse* was awarded until the early seventies, when many other distinctions for children's books already existed in France.

The changes that have taken place in the 21st century are well illustrated by what happened to the American Neustadt Prize called the "Little Nobel". The Neustadt Prize in the field of children's literature has been awarded since 2003 and, like the "adult" Neustadt, it is awarded every two years. An example of the decision of the jury may be its choice from 2007 when the prize was received by Katherine Paterson, the author of *Bridge to Terabithia*. Additionally, the material value of the prize is \$25,000, and the rules for awarding it point to works that contribute to the improvement of children's quality of life. This justification alone deserves a separate article from the perspective of childhood studies.

Przemysław Czapliński, who reminds us of significant differences between individual researchers such as Damrosch and Moretti on the one hand, and Moretti and Casanova on the other, points out at the same time: "It is a very

characteristic thing that scholars who study world literature, such as Damrosch, Moretti, Casanova and Thomsen, consider globality to be the domain of book stands at airports and railway stations" [Czapliński 2014, p. 19]. The radical separation of world and global literature, which Czapliński comments on as somewhat suspicious⁷, cannot succeed in the case of a children's book that has never been separated from popular literature for good. Books of average and sometimes even mediocre artistic value but high popularity have dominated the world market. They cannot be overlooked and completely ignored. Works as artistically and intellectually outstanding as Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story* are as rare among children's books as they are in literature written for adults.

Global literature versus local literature

The phenomena that developed ever more intensely at the end of the 20th century were closely linked to changes in the children's book industry in the age of globalisation. The specific cynicism in treating the book as a mass product, and certainly the far-reaching pragmatism, have long since replaced Hazard's idealism.

Commercialisation and internationalisation, which can be treated as phenomena worthy of observation and research, do not invalidate what is happening in "small literatures". Nor do they make it impossible for a particular coincidence of literary talent, artistic ambitions and publishers' interest to produce a work—and probably in literature so far regarded as peripheral—that is a masterpiece equal to the best "small great books", without which we cannot imagine any children's library. As far as Poland is concerned, the bright points of the current situation include the surprising and sudden improvement in the editorial side of children's books in the first years of the new century, and the great opportunities facing the design projects of outstanding artists of the younger generation, who are paving the way for themselves to audiences all over the world and who avoid problems with translation thanks to the dominant or exclusive role of the image in the message they propose. There are two groups of books that are not similar to each other. One at the highest artistic level and written primarily with an educational purpose in mind (books by Aleksandra and Daniel Mizielinski) and the other with an aesthetic, artistic goal (picturebooks by Iwona Chmielewska). Children's books (but not neces-

⁷ "After defining the border, researchers can practice cultural geography of the Nobel Prize or analyse a post-colonial novel from the perspective of the world influence of the Booker Prize, but they do not have to address the novels of Dan Brown or Joan K. Rowling" [Czapliński 2014, p. 19].

sarily children's literature) are now exported from Poland to many countries around the world.

Emer O'Sullivan, who recognises the phenomena associated with globalisation as manifestations of the most important changes that have taken place in the children's culture of Western countries in recent decades, provides a concrete example of this phenomenon. The English translation of the classic Swiss novel *Heidi* by Johanna Spyri is the version that, thanks to global market players such as Dorling Kindersley, which owns the rights to it, has reappeared on the German market in translation from English [O'Sullivan 2010, p. 10]. In another statement, which forms the introduction to a compendium of children's literature, the researcher points to the current situation in which "Great Britain and United States are the countries that 'export' most children's literature today. In other words, their literatures are the ones most translated, but they also import the least, with translations into English accounting for only around 3 percent of books published annually in Britain, and only between 1–2 percent in the United States"⁸. O'Sullivan points out that countries such as Germany, where about 30% of children's books are translated, are much friendlier to translations from other languages [O'Sullivan 2010, p. 9]. In turn, Scandinavian countries mainly promote domestic literature and have perfectly functioning systems for supporting it through subsidies [O'Sullivan 2005, p. 11]. The researcher cites the example of Denmark but, as we know, both Sweden and Norway could provide similar observations [Tubylewicz, Diduszko-Zyglewska 2015].

Purely economic phenomena, such as those related to the market activities of international publishing companies, and political ones, like efforts in totalitarian or authoritarian countries to restrict children's access to the world's resources, can rarely be presented in isolation from others. The more complex ones consist of a whole series of factors, among which the literary element is only one of the components. A famous example of global promotion, widely known and also presented from the point of view of strictly economic strategies, is the case of *Harry Potter*. Another significant global phenomenon, also appearing in Poland, is books written or signed by celebrities [Has-Tokarz 2015, pp. 87–96].

At the same time, as if in spite of these proportions existing in the global circulation, both ambitious publishers in many countries and researchers meeting at conferences willingly present what is local, specific for a certain corner of the world, a small community (not necessarily national), and take up topics relating to groups previously excluded or colonised. However, these elite interests do not translate directly into real changes in the whole system. In my opinion, the Bourdieu model could best serve the system's description

⁸ The situation is governed by rules already well known to us: strong systems affect the weak ones but are not interested in what is going on in them.

because of its relational character [Bourdieu, Wacquant 1992]. Because it is not the static image, but mutual relations within fields that are most important here. If, as in the book *The Rules of Art*, this scheme allowed us to show Flaubert's place in the literary field of his time, it should be equally helpful in presenting children's literature without dangerous simplifications [Bourdieu 1996, *Prologue*].

A stereometric model would be an ideal impossible to realise in a linear narration. However, it is worth imaging this in order to remember about the degree of simplification that creeps into each already created "flat" scheme. Paradoxically, the apparent simplicity of children's literature may turn out to be misleading here, as the number of factors influencing its development and transformations is not lower than in the case of "adult" literature.

The proposals of Franco Moretti [2005a; 2005b], whose book *Graphs, Maps, Trees* was published in Polish translation in 2016, can certainly inspire comparative studies of children's literature. "Moretti proposes professional *distant reading*, which by means of a telescopic gaze tries to cover as much territory and as many text constellations as possible", emphasises the author of the introduction to the Polish edition, Tomasz Bilczewski [2016, p. xiii].

It's hard to find a better example of the phenomena that, seen from a certain distance, reveal their similarities than contemporary works for children. Seen from a distance, they can reveal many regularities within the genres and sub-genres they represent, as well as the fact that their themes appear simultaneously in many countries, while new and current themes, which are treated as bold and original in relation to specific works, have surprisingly many equivalents in literature created in different languages. However, the suggestion from Moretti's famous paper entitled *Conjectures on World Literature*, that we should choose only one research path and consider it as the only possible [Moretti 2000, pp. 54–68], may arouse resistance and encourage the search for other paths.

Like Nils Holgersson

Looking at the multitude of phenomena that have occurred in children's literature of the last hundred years from a distant perspective allows us to see its regularities and their reflection in comparative studies both against the background of questions concerning global literature with market issues dominating in it, and the ever-changing external conditions that influence the system (systems?) of world literature with its main question regarding the canon.

Children's literature is worthy of further attention from a global perspective and in the face of global phenomena. It is, of course, impossible to see all the points of view and, in particular, to take them into account at the same time. However, assuming even the most general perspective, one does not

have to give up looking closely at specific works (and not only at such world masterpieces as *Pinocchio* or *Alice in Wonderland*) and “small literatures” as well as their mutual relations and networks of connections. A scholar of children’s literature must bear in mind the conditions of literature itself and his/her own place in the literary system, but this should not deprive him/her of his/her voice for fear that whatever e says will be “political” and not his/her own, but belonging to an anonymous *doxa*.

The metaphor of simultaneous viewing from a distance and from close up was in fact created in children’s literature. It is the hero of *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*, Nils Holgersson, who sees the land from above and at the same time in every detail, which Czesław Miłosz considered in his Nobel lecture to be the essence of the poet’s vocation⁹.

According to Pierre Bourdieu’s postulate of “reflective sociology”, it is worth putting into practice the (equally dreamlike) desire to reconcile the nomothetic and idiographic perspective. This twentieth-century sociologist stressed that one of his tasks is “to show that the opposition between the universal and the unique [...] is a false antinomy” and added that he is interested in: “[...] the relational and analogical mode of reasoning fostered by the concept of field enables us to grasp particularity within generality and generality within particularity [...]” [Bourdieu 1992, p. 75]. That is why the fantastic opportunity to see simultaneously from both perspectives, derived from the children’s novel, seems so desirable, although it remains, of course, in the realm of fairy tales. When you take pictures from children’s books, each example teaches you what mistakes to avoid. Miłosz’s other favourite child hero, the naughty boy from Zofia Urbanowska’s novel *Gucio zaczarowany* (literally: *Gucio Enchanted*), gets smaller, but cannot go back to his former size on his own. Alice in Lewis Carroll’s work, on the other hand, struggling to overcome obstacles tries to experiment with her growth, but the effects each time boil down to a grotesquely exaggerated rescaling.

One of the fairy-tale methods suggested by children’s literature, which seems to me to be close to the ideal probably because I got to know it when I was only a few years old, assumes not seeing in both ways at the same time, but the possibility of changing the perspective and scale in a free way. This magical method was attempted by a lonely boy from a story entitled *Nils Karlsson Pyssling* by Astrid Lindgren (1949, sometimes translated into English as *Simon Small*), on to whom Nils, a leprechaun, passed the mystery of transformation. Just touch a nail in the wooden floor and say “killevippen” to reduce your size to that of a household leprechaun. To return to your old pro-

⁹ Czesław Miłosz’s Nobel lecture with a reference to the motif from Selma Lagerlöf’s novel has been quoted many times. I mentioned the importance of the Swedish novel’s first Polish edition from 1910 in Janina Mortkowicz’s translation for Miłosz [Czabanowska-Wróbel 1996, p. 238]. On the other hand, in the “micro and macro” perspective, Bilczewski relates Miłosz’s words to the poet’s way of thinking [Bilczewski 2014, pp. 106–107].

portions, you need to repeat the same thing. The only thing that can make this difficult is finding the particular floorboard and the magic nail. We only know that it was somewhere under the bed in a childhood home.

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